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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/982,914	10/19/2001	Todd Allen Link	15892-US	8531
7590 02/12/2007 Brian H. Buck c/o Deere & Company One John Deere Place Moline, IL 61265-8098			EXAMINER LOPEZ, FRANK D	
			ART UNIT 3745	PAPER NUMBER
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS			02/12/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/982,914

Applicant(s)

LINK ET AL.

Examiner

F. Daniel Lopez

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on November 17, 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) 8,9,12 and 13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 8,9,12 and 13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on November 17, 2006 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

Applicant's arguments filed November 17, 2006, have been fully considered but they are not deemed to be persuasive.

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 8, 9, 12 and 13 have been considered but are deemed to be moot in view of the new grounds of rejection. The new grounds of rejection are necessitated by the added limitation concerning the decks.

In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 8, 9, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art in view of Cooper and Truax et al. Applicant's admitted prior art (fig 4) discloses a hydraulic system for a lawn mower having a first center deck and second and third side decks, each associated with a respective first (64), second (66) and third (68) motor, driving a respective mower blade, connected in

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series, comprising a first (82) and second solenoid operated directional control valves provide first and second pilot signals, respectively, to first (74, 80) and second (including 76) pilot operated directional control valves, which allows flow to the respective second and third motors in the presence of a respective pilot pressure and preventing flow in the absence of the pilot signal; but does not disclose that the flow through the second or third motor is not directed through any other restrictive valve; or that the respective pilot signal is provided when the respective side deck is moved to an operating lowered position, thereby allowing flow to the motor and that the respective pilot signal is ended when the respective side deck is moved to a non-operating raised position, thereby preventing flow to the motor.

Cooper teaches, for a hydraulic system including first (22, 24), second (52) and third (55, 56) motors; wherein a pair of directional control valves (66, 68) allows flow to the respective motor in the presence of an actuating signal (moved away from center position) and prevents flow in the absence of the signal (in center position); that the flow through the second or third motor is not directed through any other restrictive valve.

Since the directional control valves of Applicant's admitted prior art and Cooper are interchangeable to allow serial connection of motors, or to bypass a motor; It would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to one having ordinary skill in the art to replace the valve system of Applicant's admitted prior art with the valving system like Cooper's, wherein the flow through the second or third motor is not directed through any other restrictive valve, as taught by Cooper, as a matter of engineering expediency.

Truax et al teaches, for a hydraulic system for a lawn mower having a side deck (9) associated with a motor (16) driving a mower blade; wherein a directional control valve (102) allows flow to the motor in the presence of a signal (via 103) and prevents flow in the absence of the signal; that the signal is provided and flow to the motor is allowed, when the side deck is moved to an operating lowered position; and that the signal is ended and the flow to the motor is prevented when the side deck is moved to a non-operating raised position, for the purpose of having a safety feature, preventing operation of the motor when the deck is above a certain position (e.g. column 4 line 64 – column 5 line 3).

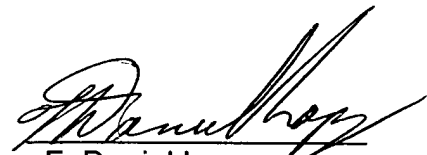
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Since Applicant's admitted prior art and Truax et al are both from the same field of endeavor, the purpose disclosed by Truax et al would have been recognized in the pertinent art of Applicant's admitted prior art. It would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to one having ordinary skill in the art to provide the respective pilot signals, thereby allowing flow to the respective motor of Applicant's admitted prior art, when the respective side deck is moved to an operating lowered position; and end the respective pilot signal thereby preventing flow to the respective motor, when the respective side deck is moved to a non-operating raised position, as taught by Truax et al, for the purpose of having a safety feature, preventing operation of the motor when the deck is above a certain position

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dan Lopez whose telephone number is 571-272-4821. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 6:15 AM -3:45 PM. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ed Look, can be reached on 571-272-4820. The fax number for this group is 571-273-8300. Any inquiry of a general nature should be directed to the Help Desk, whose telephone number is 1-800-PTO-9199.



F. Daniel Lopez
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3745
February 5, 2007